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WALL PAPER DECORATION.

VERY nearly every decorator experiences a difficulty in using wall paper. While he may find the paper that exactly suits his purpose, he is compelled to use for a border, or for the ceiling, something that is not exactly what he wants, but is the nearest that he can procure. A method of obviating the difficulty consists in painting or stenciling with ornament the ceiling of apartments in a style that will correspond with the side wall. This we believe is done, in the majority of cases, simply because the proper style of coloring in paper-hangings for the ceiling is inaccessible. The ceiling is the best field in a room for decorative treatment. Being plain and unbroken it requires ornament. There is no reason why that the work of decorating it cannot be as well done by the paper-hanger as the house painter, and some of the more enterprising wall-paper manufacturers are alive to the opportunity thus possessed, and have produced wall-papers for the ceiling as well as for the side walls. Their decorative artists have conceived whole decorations for the entire room, by the use of which time, labor and expense are saved with the result of beautiful and pleasing interiors.

One of the firms above referred to is Messrs. M. H. Birge & Sons, of Buffalo, and we present herewith illustrations of interiors entirely decorated with combinations in wall paper produced by this enterprising firm.

Fig. 1, represents a library with wall and frieze in a floral scroll repeat with a subdued ceiling paper to match.

Fig. 2, is a music-room, the wall-paper motive being procurable in any of the softer tones of color.

Fig. 3, is a smoking-room, which has a bold scroll motive. These patterns are so combined that any salesman can make the sole and produce the decorative effect that would otherwise require the skill of an accomplished decorator. Being shown and sold as a whole decoration, it is possible for the dealer to obtain a better price for the combination than for the same goods not so arranged.

The St. James Hotel, New York City, has recently been decorated by Messrs. H. M. Birge & Sons with their artistic wall-papers. The dining room has the walls so occupied with windows and mirrors that there is but little *bona fide* wall space as a field for the operations of the paper-hanger. However, there are on one side of the room a great number of panel spaces, which are filled very effectively by means of large tapestry panels, having at top and bottom tapestry borders, with fruit and flower motives, all produced in the colors that characterize the textile fabric. The decoration of the large panels consists of one or more mediaeval figures thrown upon a landscape, the whole being produced with that fidelity to tapestry hangings that characterize the Birge wall-papers. The frieze consists of a finely flowing Renaissance scroll, full of delightful details, produced in a blending of dark green and very dark red lacquers on a dark brown ground. The ground

of the ceiling is covered with a plainly blended canvas embossed lacquer paper.

The ceiling is laid off in isolated panels, each outlined with a heavy moulding in plastic relief. Within the moulding the panels have borders consisting of a blending of dark green and dark brown Renaissance scrolls, the field of each panel being thickly covered with the interwoven clustering of scrolls in similar tints. The quite artistic, and eminently beautiful effect of the papers employed in this apartment must be seen to be appreciated. No one would possibly believe that effects so splendid and unique could be produced in wall-papers until he has seen the decorator himself.

Truly the above mentioned firm have opened a new world of design and coloring in their admirable wall papers, and the success achieved speaks volumes for the enterprise and artistic taste of this highly successful firm. Our illustrations are from the latest catalogue issued by Messrs. Birge & Sons, which will be mailed free to any of our readers on application.



FIG. 1.—THE LIBRARY.

REALISTIC, a style of decoration in which natural forms are applied without any alteration from the natural types. It is opposed to the idealistic and conventional in ornament, and is rarely found in the best historic styles. The great fault of modern decoration is the true free use of realistic ornament. We are obliged to walk on beds of natural flowers on our carpets, and hang our pictures upon nosegays of flowers on our walls. A false public taste is the cause of such barbarism.

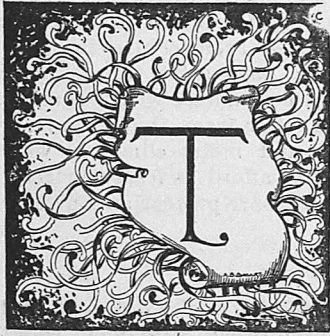
REPETITION is the multiplication in ornament of any decorated unit, and one of the chief laws in ornament. A commonplace object, such as a small cube being repeated and formed into a continuous series, produces an agreeable effect in a moulding. The simplest and most unmeaning of forms derive all their value from repetition. Aesthetic forms, such as frets, bands, bead ornaments, all moulding decorations, and simple diapers, may be repeated to the greatest extent without appearing monotonous. Symbolic, and distinguishing forms of any

style, on the other hand, may only be represented to a very limited extent, even if they only are simple leaf forms. When we come to independent ornament, such as emblems, trophies, etc., still less repetition is allowed. Ascending higher in the scale of ornamental elements we come to the delineation of animals, and the human figure. These forms, especially the latter, can hardly be used twice in the same design, or scheme of decoration, except at great intervals. An exception to the rule would be in the case of Cupids or Amorini, and these must not be rendered so much in imitation of nature or realistic in effect, but a strictly decorative quality must be imparted to them such as in the arranging of their flowing lines to compose with the ornamental spaces they are intended to occupy. In short, the more like a transcript from nature the decorative unit appears, the less will it bear repetition. We notice in all barbaric ornament, repetition carried to excess.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

THE MADISON GARDEN THEATRE AND CONCERT HALL.

By H. TAYLOR.



THE most fashionable style of interior decoration in the United States at present is the use of one or more styles French Renaissance in plastic relief. If we were asked to specify an important illustration of the decorative fashion, we could not do better than refer the questioner to the decorations of the Madison Square Garden Theatre in New York, which is of extreme but discreet richness. The work has been admirably performed by Messrs Herter Brothers

of Fifth Avenue, New York, and the style is Louis XVI. In



FIG. 2.—THE MUSIC-ROOM.

this particular style the French Renaissance reached its ultimate elaboration of growth, and it is the Pompadour *en masse* that lends such a glory to the eighteenth century of France.

It is needless to say that the Garden Theatre has been constructed on the most approved scientific principles, and its interior economy is such as to insure the most luxurious accommodation to its patrons. Passing up the ample stairway, which is clothed with heavy Wilton carpet, the visitor is struck with the general air of luxury and beauty which characterizes the surroundings. The walls of the stairway, as well as those of the theatre itself, are hung with a silk brocade in pink and cream tints, illuminated with a new weaving in threads of gold. The ceiling of the corridor is in mottled pea green and white effects.

The lobby which serves as a spacious retiring room, is separated from the theatre proper by heavy silk plush portières. From the balcony we obtain a perfect view of the interior of the theatre itself.

There is a magnificent proscenium arch, on which is concentrated the most gorgeous decoration, including a splendid allegorical female figure in high relief illustrating the spirit of the drama. In the extension of the proscenium there are sixty small panels in relief surrounded by bay leaves, while in the centre of each is a rose in plastic relief. Over the arch is some delicate scroll work, also in relief, the entire decoration being in white and gold. In the centre is a large medallion of musical instruments, and on each side are masks with wreaths of bay leaves. The frieze is exceptionally beautiful in design, the motive being a series of floral ovals and festoons in plastic relief.

The columns supporting the boxes, as well as the boxes themselves, are wreathed with plastic ornament in floral effects, adding an additional feeling to the beauty of the general interior, which presents a scene of lightness and purity, with a marvelous harmony of artistic expression.

The curtain is an accurate reproduction on a large scale of Boldini's painting of "The Park of Versailles in the time of Louis XVI," the subject harmonizing well with the surrounding decorations. The fronts of the balcony and gallery are covered with plaster bas-reliefs. The ceiling is dome shaped and artistically ornamented in scroll-work with gold lines running from the electrolier in the centre to the horizon of the dome, which is filled at the apex with a beautiful fretwork design. That portion of the ceiling over the gallery which is quite flat is decorated with massive panels. The walls, like the corridors, are hung with striped silk brocade in cream and pink tints, with interwoven threads of gold. The design of the brocade, of course, also harmonizing with the style of the decoration throughout.

The general view of the interior from the stage presents a perfect example of the decorator's art, and the well known firm who have lavished their best thought and energy on the building are to be congratulated for the signal of success which has attended their efforts.

The red plush upholstery of the chairs serves to heighten, by contrast, the artistic beauty of the decorations as a whole. One thing is noticeable; that the rising angle on which the seats everywhere are placed gives to the occupant of each seat a very satisfying and unobstructed view of the stage. The stage itself is extremely commodious and is probably the largest in the city, being one hundred feet deep and sunk twenty-five feet in the solid rock. Such capacity is absolutely necessary where first class combinations appear, as nothing is so embarrassing to a stage manager as to find his stage too small to allow necessary changes of scenery to be made while the company has sufficient space to perform their parts.

There are six tiers of dressing-rooms upholstered and heated on the most approved principles. With respect to luxurious accommodation and beauty of decoration the Garden Theatre is second to none in the country.

THE CONCERT HALL.

The Concert Hall, which is the third grand division of the Madison Square Garden building, is reached from the main entrance to the amphitheatre by means of a corridor next to the box office. A general inspection of the decorations in this regal chamber, which is Louis XVI in style, shows that the governing idea in designing and decorating the same was to get as fine an interior as it is possible to produce by the present development of decorative art. As in the case of the Theatre, the Concert Hall is also decorated by the firm of Messrs. Herter Brothers, who are recognized leaders in the city for high class work.

The north end of the hall contains five deep bays, surrounded by arches covered over with delicate *papier maché* relief. Under each arch are five female figures in high relief supporting floral wreaths, and in the centre is a medallion of musical instruments of various kinds, symbolic of the use to which the chamber is assigned. The prevailing tones of the decoration are white and pale green. On the south side and on the balcony floor are a series of arches hung with light green portières, dividing the concert hall from the ball-room beyond. The space over the

musician's platform which is at the west end of the hall, is handsomely decorated with floral wreaths of scroll work in relief.

The ceiling which is supported by five iron beams encrusted with *papier-maché* relief, the foundation of the ornament being a net-work of wire, is decorated in a series of massive panels, in each of which a large octagon encloses two smaller ones, the centre being filled with a massive rosette; this style of ornament being not only exceedingly beautiful, but serves to break echoes.

The seats in the hall are luxuriously upholstered in pale green plush, relieved with white and gold tints. The decorations are picked out with shrimp pink, light blue and gold, the white tone of course, prevailing. Adjacent to the corridor leading to the hall are several ladies' dressing-rooms handsomely upholstered. The walls of the outside corridors are covered with a Japanese aluminum paper. Mr. Stanford White of the firm of McKimm, Meade and White, is the architect, and his work has been loudly praised.

The idea in constructing such a magnificent chamber was not to obtain the variety class of concert hall, but a luxurious retreat such as is found in a king's palace and in which the elite of society could come together to celebrate events by entertainments such as could not be well provided for in an ordinary house. Notable gatherings such as that at the time of the Washington Centennial, balls, and concerts by the world's favorite artists will be the species of entertainments given in this regal chamber, of which New York is justly proud. The hall was formally opened on the eighth January by a reception given by the Ladies Assembly.

SPOTTING, this word has nearly the same meaning as "powdering" the only difference being that the units of form in such decoration have (or may have) an apparent geometrical basis, the ground in both cases occupying a larger space than the ornament.

SUBORDINATION, the keeping of certain parts of a design secondary and inferior in importance to other parts that we wish to make the primary elements of chief prominence; it is illustrated by the series of inferior portions regularly descending in the order of importance, and used as a foil to show to the best advantage the larger masses in painting and drawing, and the higher relieved portions in modelling.

TANGENTIAL GROWTH, the principal construction lines in foliated ornament and scroll patterns should illustrate "tangential growth; the stems and curves should appear to flow out of the central line. This natural principle is derived from the growth of stems and branches of freely growing plants; and under this law the secondary lines of construction in a flowing pattern should appear to touch or glide into the primary ones, and not to cross or interlace.

SUPERIMPOSED, or SUPERPOSED, an ornament which is laid on the surface of another, such as a flowing pattern on a diapered ground; or broad, ribbon-like ornament laid on a pattern formed of narrow and fine lines as seen mostly in the wall decoration of Moresque design and in Persian tiles. In the former kind of ornament, as in the wall-patterns of the Alhambra, we often find two, three and sometimes four different designs superimposed on each other, and the judicious use of different colors and gold prevented confusion in the patterns; the complexity is even of a well-ordered kind.

UNIFORMITY by itself cannot be considered a good quality in ornament for, as a part of the whole, it requires the addition of contrast or variety. The circle is a good illustration of uniformity in shape, but is inferior to the ellipse which possesses both unity and contrast. The superiority of the Greek moldings over the Roman lies in the fact that the former are designed from sections of the ellipse, and the latter from those of the circle. Uniformity alone produces monotony, which is always painful to the eye in design.

REPOSE is quietness, dignity and breadth; designs that best illustrate repose, would be marked by an easy flow of line without abruptness in form or color, and an absence of small detail; or if the detail be kept subordinate and only suggested, the quality of repose may still remain; the frieze of the Parthenon is a fine example of this latter variety of repose. Repose is the opposite to unrest or spottiness. It is well illustrated, and is a characteristic of classical architecture, in opposition to the unrest of the pinnacled and spiky forms of the Gothic styles. While the former is in consonance with a southern climate, where broad shadows and shelter from the sun are desirable, the latter is suited to colder and moist climates, where its sloping roofs and pointed character afford at least surface to rain and snow, and thus in a great measure protect and preserve the building.

SCALE is the relative natural proportion of the different parts of a decorative composition to each other. Ornament should be designed in reference to the position it is to occupy, size,

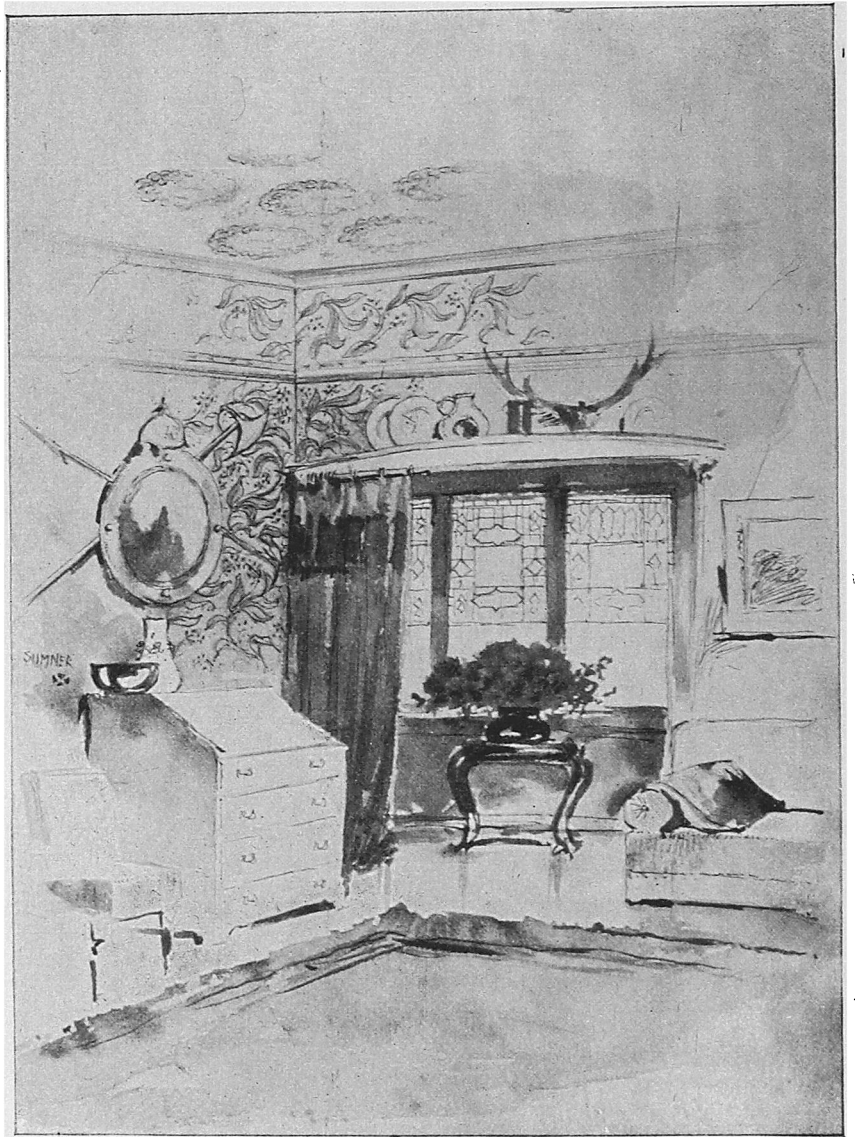


FIG. 3.—THE SMOKING-ROOM.

and distance from which it is viewed. If a design is composed of different organic forms, they should have their natural proportions to each other, especially if these forms occupy the same field, but this need not be the case when different parts are cut off from each other by inclosing mouldings, as in panels, pilasters, medallions, sprandrils, etc.; the smaller the enclosing space the smaller in scale and vice-versa, will be the ornamental filling; for instance, the frieze of a room, partly from its greater size, and partly from its greater distance from the eye, or line of the horizon, will have its decoration larger in scale than the panels of the door or window shutters. The same rule applies to scale in all objects of decorative art.